

The Crested Bunting *Melophus lathami* is the only resident bunting in Burma, but Smythies (1953) lists 8 winter visitors, i.e. *Emberiza aureola*, *cia*, *elegans*, *furcata*, *pusilla*, *rutila*, *spodocephala* and *tristrami*.

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## Ethiopia as a presumed wintering area for the eastern Grasshopper Warbler *Locustella naevia straminea*

by J. S. Ash

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The occurrence of the eastern race of the Grasshopper Warbler, *Locustella naevia straminea*, in Ethiopia has been reported on by Ash & Watson (1974). Since then I have captured 6 more birds, 2 from the earlier site at Koka (8° 27' N, 39° 06' E) at 1445 m; 3 at 1280 m from Aseita (11° 33' N, 41° 26' E), which is only 4 km north of the locality where Guichard (1948) collected one in 1947; and I netted one more on Debre Mariam Island (11° 38' N, 37° 26' E) in Lake Tana at 1825 m. Olson (1976) recorded 2 more near Bahar Dar (11° 35' N, 37° 25' E) at 1825 m, about 5 km south of my Debre Mariam site, and one from 4 km south of Gondar at 12° 37' N, 37° 28' E. Table 1 gives the dates, measurements and weights of these 10 records.

TABLE I

Details of the 10 *Locustella naevia straminea* records in Ethiopia

Locality	Date	Sex	Wing (mm)	Tail (mm)	Weight (gm)	Time	Moult	Observer
Abroberifaghe (Harar)	12 ii 47	—	—	—	—	—	—	Guichard 1948
Koka (Shoa)	24 ii 73	—	62	—	10.2	1130	o	Ash & Watson 1974
Gondar (Begemdir)	24 xi 73	♂	62	54	14.3	a.m.	o	Olson 1976
Bahar Dar (Gojjam)	27 ii 75	♀	61	56	15.4	—	o	Olson 1976
Koka (Shoa)	15 ix 75	—	62	—	11.0	0900	o	Ash
* " "	25 ix 75	—	58	—	11.9	1100	√	"
* " "	25 ix 75	—	58	—	11.0	1730	√	"
Aseita (Harar)	11 ii 77	—	—	—	12.1	—	o	"
" "	14 ii 77	—	—	—	13.1	—	o	"
" "	16 ii 77	—	—	—	11.9	—	o	"
†D. Mariam Is. (Gojjam)	31 iii 77	—	62	58	12.4	1000	o	Ash
† " " "	3 iv 77	—	62	58	13.3	1830	o	"

Notes: \* and † indicate birds are the same individuals. Full data for the Aseita birds were lost during my hasty evacuation from Ethiopia.

The breeding range of the eastern subspecies *straminea* extends from east Russia (c. 55° E) across the Kirghiz steppes to the Altai (c. 85° E), south to Transcaspia, Turkestan and Sinkiang (Williamson 1960). Apart from Ethiopia, *L. n. straminea* is known on passage or in winter quarters from Iran, Afghanistan and India (Williamson 1960), to which can be added one from Arabia (Ticehurst & Cheesman 1925).

The 10 birds in Ethiopia occurred in autumn between 15 September and 24 November, and in spring between 11 February and 3 April. It is just possible that the absence of December and January records indicates that the final wintering area lies in an undiscovered region further south, but the present evidence suggests that the wintering area for the eastern population of this species in East Africa lies in Ethiopia between  $8^{\circ} 27'$  and  $12^{\circ} 37' N$  and between  $37^{\circ} 25'$  and  $41^{\circ} 26' E$ , at an altitudinal range of 1250 to 2000 m.

The Ethiopian habitat varies somewhat from site to site: at Koka, from where there are 3 records, it is lakeside *Acacia/Balanites* bush with thick underlying cover; at Aseita, thick riverside *Acacia* woodland with dense underlying cover; near Bahar Dar, extensive lakeside beds of *Phragmites* and *Cyperus papyrus*; on Debre Mariam Island, open deciduous woodland with dense bushy areas near water; near Gondar, on a "brushy hillside" (Olson 1976); at Guichard's (1948) site, "in dense grass cover along the River Hawash".

No other weights other than those in Table 1 are available for *L. n. straminea*, which is smaller than the western form *L. n. naevia*, for which there are many data. Winter weights in February of 4 unfattened *straminea* range from 10.2 to 13.1 g (the specimen on 27 February at 15.4 g was fat). The Gondar bird on 24 November at 14.3 g would appear to be heavy for the time of year unless it was preparing for further migration. Williamson (1960) gives weights of 65 migrant *L. n. naevia* in England as ranging from 10.6 to 16.3 g (mean 13.1 g).

An indication of its frequency of occurrence in relation to other Palaearctic migrants at Koka was given by Ash & Watson (1974). In February 1977 the 3 Grasshopper Warblers captured at Aseita were included in a total of 487 migrants of 23 species, of which most were thought to be overwintering in the 7-hectare netting area (Ash, in prep.). The bird on Debre Mariam Island was included in a total of 287 migrants of 17 species in an area of approximately 25 hectares, but at this time in March and April most of the regular migrants were all passing through.

Four of the 10 birds from Ethiopia have been collected: the first, by Guichard, is in the British Museum (BM 1947-31-8, specimen registered but still not located, *contra* Ash & Watson 1974), the next, by Ash at Koka, is in the Smithsonian Institution (USNM No. 552733), as are the 2 by Olson in the list above (USNM No. 569269 and USNM No. 569270). The others were ringed and released.

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## Inland and coastal occurrences of Broad-billed Sandpipers *Limicola falcinellus* in Ethiopia and Djibouti

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Probably because Broad-billed Sandpipers *Limicola falcinellus* are not easily identified in non-breeding plumage, their wintering areas are still poorly known. In Ethiopia, Urban & Brown (1971) were only able to cite a single occurrence, the 2 females collected by Smith (1955) on 12 May 1953 at Massawa, Eritrea, on the Red Sea coast.

I am now able to add 4 new records (below), of which the first 3 are from Ethiopia and the last from Djibouti. There are no previous records from Djibouti.

Locality	Coordinates	Dates	Numbers
Assab area, Eritrea (coastal)	13° 02' N, 42° 45' E	25.xii-1.i.71	12+
Koka, Shoa (inland)	8° 27' N, 39° 06' E	22-29.x.74	1
Koka, Shoa (inland)	Same as above	14-15.ix.75	1
Djibouti (coastal)	11° 35' N, 43° 11' E	25.xii.75	3

The 1974 bird caught on 28 October weighed 29.1 g at 1500 LMT, wing 104 mm, bill from skull 36 mm. The 1975 adult in alternate (breeding) plumage caught on 14 September weighed 24.9 g at 1530 LMT, wing 104 mm. I have 2 other probable records from inland Ethiopia, at Lake Basaaka (8° 54' N, 39° 52' E) on 15 November 1969 (Ash 1972) and at Mataka (10° 00' N, 40° 34' E) on 11 October 1972.

Meinertzhagen (1954) states that the species is fairly common on the Egyptian and Sinai coasts, birds arriving there as early as 5 August; otherwise he only mentions some birds from Aden (mentioned below), and states that many had been obtained at Fao (at the head of the Persian Gulf) in August and September. Large numbers, up to 500 in a flock, are recorded from Aden (Browne 1949, 1955, Nisbet 1961, Paige 1960), but there are no records from Somalia (Archer & Godman 1937).

Elsewhere in Africa south of the Sahara, the Afrotropical region of Crosskey & White (1977), records are scattered, except that in Kenya numbers, up to 38 together, have now been seen annually both inland and on the coast since the Hopsons (1972) first recorded the species there (Backhurst *in litt*, Britton 1974, Britton & Britton 1973, 1976, EANHS 1977, Hopson & Hopson 1972, 1973). These Kenyan birds have been seen between 2 August and 8 April, with up to 33 in one coastal locality in midwinter. K. D. Smith, who summarizes the occurrences in Moreau (1972), refers to one in Nigeria (Dowsett 1968), one in Uganda, where there are now 2 occurrences